

EDITORIAL

Dear Quaternarists,

In a fit of nostalgia for a world more normal, I looked back at the December 2019 issue of QA. It seems it was written in a parallel universe, with reports on scientific and social gatherings at INQUA Congress in Dublin; many reports on field tours and reports of active research projects. So much has changed, and now our lexicon includes more words like disruption, pandemics, social distancing, bubbles, R number, vaccine etc. We really had little idea of what was peeking over the horizon back in December 2019.

We have been fortunate in Australasia to have favourable geography: island nations with securable borders, and manageable populations where public health measures can be employed to control outbreaks. And certainly for universities, the impact this year has been swift. Closed borders and few international students has resulted in a drop in revenue and resultant cost cutting measures. A wholesale shift to teaching on line. And quickly. Together with our colleagues in research institutes, we have endeavoured to meet our research outputs. It has been a challenge to our mental and physical energy.

But to quote Benjamin Franklin: “out of adversity comes opportunity”. While we had to cancel our AQUA conference, we took the initiative and organised a pop up e-conference which proved to be popular, with sessions to cover both Australian and New Zealand research. We asked our ECR's to step up to the plate and chair sessions, and this proved to be highly successful. Zoe Thomas' report can be found in this issue. And our conference is rescheduled for 2021. With the possibility of a Trans-Tasman bubble early next year, fingers crossed for a successful conference in the Atherton Tablelands.

Field research continues. Here we report on a programme of research in the Lake Tennyson area in Canterbury, incorporating researchers from many different institutes in New Zealand. Matthew Adeleye reports on an extensive vegetation survey in Victoria, while Tim Barrows reflects on a past field trip to the West coast of New Zealand, and the challenges of fieldwork in the impenetrable and wet bush.

In other news, with the recent re-election of the Government in New Zealand and the declaration of a climate emergency on December 3rd, there is the promise its public sector at least can achieve carbon neutrality by 2025. The Government's programme will be backed by a NZ\$200 million (\$142 million) fund to finance replacing coal boilers and help purchase electric or hybrid vehicles (Reuters, 2020). There is hope that here in New Zealand we can start to prioritise and focus on achieving some tangible outcomes.

Reuters (2020). New Zealand PM Ardern Defends Climate Change Goals After Thunberg Scoffs at Emergency Declaration. Accessed 17/12/2020 from <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-12-14/new-zealand-pm-ardern-defends-climate-change-goals-after-thunberg-scoffs-at-emergency-declaration>

Teaming up with Sanja and Carol on the editorial team are Emma Rehn and Lydia Mackenzie. They join us as shadow editors on Quaternary Australasia. Welcome aboard.

Yours Quaternarily,

Sanja Van Huet and Carol Smith

Co-editors

Emma Rehn and Lydia Mackenzie

Shadow Co-editors

